

CURRENT  
QUESTIONS OF  
POLITICAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN  
WEST GERMANY

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*2 Documents on the National Policy of the GDR*  
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## **Current Questions of Political Development in West Germany**



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VERLAG ZEIT IM BILD



Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR, replies to questions by *Neues Deutschland* on 29 November 1966





## On the Joint Right-wing Course from Strauss to Wehner

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Comrade Ulbricht, how do you assess the negotiations on the formation of a West German coalition government between the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Socialist Union) and the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany)?*

Walter Ulbricht:

It is a right-wing course. Messrs. Adenauer and Strauss have been successful in winning the revanchist politicians in the social democratic party leadership for the emergency and bunker community with the CDU/CSU. Under the sign of chauvinism and revanchism a front of the reactionary forces is being organized. That approximately corresponds—naturally, with the historically-conditioned differences—to the conception of Hugen-

berg and other reactionary forces in 1932. But with the obvious difference that today they have succeeded in involving some members of the SPD leadership for Bonn's reactionary emergency front.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*What will the policy of this coalition of the CDU/SPD be?*

Walter Ulbricht:

The rightist course of this government is on the lines of nationalism, revanchism and social reaction. This coalition will undeniably be of the greatest danger to the West German population. It is bad enough when Herr Brandt declares that the coalition will only exist for a certain time, because just during the time that this coalition exists a state of affairs is to be established which will be most detrimental to the people.

The working people, for instance, are to be burdened with a budget deficit of more than 9 thousand million marks.

Measures for slashing social services are being prepared, which are

especially aimed against the workers and office employees, against the trade unions and the local communities.

The democratic provisions of the Basic Law (constitution) are to be annulled by the emergency laws.

The struggle for hegemony in Europe and against European security is to be sharpened by kindling nationalism.

Instead of agreement with the GDR, a policy of intensified attacks against the GDR is envisaged.

The support for the dirty war of the USA in Vietnam is to be increased.

The neo-colonial policy already conducted by the Erhard government is to be intensified.

No social democrat will probably be able to assert that West German citizens who voted for social democratic candidates wanted thereby to support the policy of Adenauer, Strauss and Kiesinger.

The SPD-leadership should not forget that their increase in votes in North Rhine-Westphalia, in Hesse and in Bavaria, are for the most part due to the votes of the consistent opponents of the CDU, to the votes of the communists, the supporters of the DFU (German Peace Union), and of

the Frankfurt "State of Emergency of Democracy" movement. None of these voters expected that his vote could be misused for a pact between Wehner and Strauss.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*What is the character of a coalition government of the CDU/CSU with the SPD in your opinion, Comrade Ulbricht?*

Walter Ulbricht:

A government of the CDU/CSU with the SPD is without doubt only one more government moving to the right. As I already said, this government has been given the task by the CDU/CSU of nullifying the democratic constitutional provisions of the West German Basic Law by means of the so-called stabilization law, the emergency constitution and changes in the election law. At the same time the provisional cabinet is to carry on the struggle for West German hegemony in Western Europe and the psychological war against the GDR with new methods and intensified demagoguery.

supported by the united reactionary forces. Their tactics are to increase taxes and slash social services in order to find the thousands of millions of marks for armament, at the same time reducing the democratic rights of the people with the aid of the emergency constitution in order to create the internal prerequisites for the psychological war and provocations against the GDR. The real political power in the West German state apparatus is in the hands of the big capitalist monopolies and associations and their Bundeswehr. The entry of SPD leaders in a CDU government represents only a support for state monopoly capitalism.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*What parties are still actually defending the constitution in West Germany?*

Walter Ulbricht:

The most consistent defender of the democratic basic rights of the constitution was and is the Communist Party of Germany. It was banned

precisely because of its struggle against militarism, for democracy and against an alliance of the SPD with the CDU/CSU, the most reactionary, most anti-labour and anti-peace party.

The German Peace Union is the only legal party in West Germany struggling to defend the constitution. We hope that now many organizations and members of the Social Democratic Party, the Communist Party, the DFU, and the democratic forces in the Frankfurt "State of Emergency of Democracy" movement will come together for the joint defence of the democratic constitutional rights and social rights and that they will struggle courageously for disarmament and understanding.

It is encouraging that strong forces of West German youth headed by social democratic young people are standing up against the rightist course. That is understandable because it is a question of the life of West German young people, a question of their future. After all, West German young people do not want to perish in the bunker policy of Strauss, Wehner, and Schmidt.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Comrade Ulbricht, did the SPD leaders actually have the possibility to go a different way? Would it for instance have been possible to form a government—under the leadership of the SPD—with the FDP (Free Democratic Party), supported by all democratic forces, especially by the trade unions?*

Walter Ulbricht:

The SPD leaders had this possibility. There was a democratic demand for new elections. Added to this was the fact that the FDP had bindingly stated that all its deputies would vote for a government with Brandt as federal chancellor. According to statements by representatives of the SPD party leadership, extensive agreement had been achieved with the negotiators of the FDP concerning the factual questions. Various democratic forces in West Germany had come out in support of such a coalition. It was thus possible to go a democratic way. An SPD-FDP coalition would also have meant the removal of the CDU from the government in North Rhine-Westphalia and the formation of an SPD-FDP government here,

too. The influence of the CDU in the most important industrial part of West Germany would thus have been broken. The majority in the Bonn Bundestag as well as in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony would have made it absolutely possible for the SPD and the FDP to carry out their policy on the basis of the Basic Law, based on a simple majority and supported by broad circles of the population. It is known that Herr Adenauer ruled for many years with only one majority vote—his own. A democratic policy would require the SPD leaders to be willing to rely trustingly on the working class and on all democratic forces in West Germany.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Comrade Ulbricht, did you aim at such an alternative when you outlined your proposals for a West German policy of the centre to the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party?*



Walter Ulbricht:

You are quite right. I had visualized such an alternative. I said—analogously—that it would already be beneficial to people of both German states and for security in Europe if such a policy were carried out in Bonn. I understand this policy as a policy of bringing about peaceful coexistence between the two German states. Therefore, steps should be taken to maintain the status quo. Such a policy also recommended a renunciation of all the talk about re-establishing the frontiers of 1937 and giving up the illusion that there could ever develop a situation or possibilities for extending capitalist domination in West Germany to the East. I indicated that there should be no hindrance for beginning negotiations with the government of the GDR on normalizing relations between the two German states if the West German Federal Republic has no conquest intentions.

It is quite clear that if the government in Bonn does not demand frontier changes and has no intention to conquer the GDR, then it is also possible to normalize relations of the West German Federal Republic with the socialist countries in Europe. I especially mentioned that then there would

also be no reason for armament and that the renunciation by the two German states of joint control over nuclear weapons and atomic armament would not only be welcomed by the people of both German states but also by all peoples of Europe. With such a policy a West German government could immediately reduce armament costs by half, which would surely affect the West German budget favourably as well as the competitive efficiency of West German industry and the position of the working people.

In short, such a policy could have solved many partial problems, it could have served the security of the peoples and states of Europe as well as promote the normalization of relations between the two German states.

Such a democratic policy would have meant the unification of all democratic forces from the Frankfurt "State of Emergency of Democracy" movement up to circles of the intelligentsia such as Professor Jaspers and such circles of the bourgeoisie who see the only alternative in a peaceful foreign policy and a democratic internal policy.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Comrade Ulbricht, did you or did the Political Bureau of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany directly inform the leadership of the Social Democratic Party of Germany of your conceptions of such a democratic alternative—apart from your basic statements at the plenary session of the Central Committee?*

Walter Ulbricht:

When the government crisis in Bonn had reached its deepest point I wrote a letter to Chairman Willy Brandt of the SPD. In this letter I proposed an agreement between the SED and SPD on necessary measures for pushing back and eliminating neo-nazism which is raising its head in West Germany. We based this proposal on the supposition that the struggle against a neo-fascist development in West Germany is one of the common interests of our two parties.

We also openly stated in this connection how we judge the attempt of the CDU/CSU to charge the SPD, through involvement in a government coalition, with the responsibility for a shipwrecked policy and at the same

time with responsibility for the attempt to reconstruct the situation at the expense of the broad masses of working people. We left no doubt that the participation of SPD leaders in a government with the CDU and Strauss, for whom there exists only a "Red Case", as he declared, would only further complicate the already very complicated relations between the two German states. I stressed in my letter that we follow with interest the negotiations between the leaderships of the SPD and the FDP on the formation of a coalition. Thus we showed our readiness to reach understanding with an SPD/FDP government and with all those forces in West Germany which oppose a neo-nazi and social reactionary development. Such a promise on our part was in the interest of peace and security in Europe and in the interest of the necessary normalization of relations between the two German states. But Willy Brandt rejected political negotiations between the party leaderships of the SED and SPD and protested against our letter.

Thus we openly communicated our views to the SPD leadership. We pursue a realistic policy corresponding to the interests of the West German workers and the great majority of the West German population. We

think that only such a policy makes possible a relaxation in the relations between the two German states and the bringing about of European security.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Were you surprised by the secret negotiations of Herr Wehner with Strauss and Kiesinger and by the official coalition negotiations of the Wehner group with the CDU/CSU leadership?*

Walter Ulbricht:

Although we would not put anything past Herr Wehner we did not suppose that he would be allowed to conduct negotiations of such significance without thorough consultation and the decision of the elected SPD party organizations, the more so since the SPD leadership is making efforts, in this of all situations where the CDU/CSU cart is stuck fast in the mud, to pull this cart out of the mud, even sacrificing the interests of its own members and voters. We had long since reckoned with the

possibility of an SPD-CDU/CSU coalition since in June 1960 Herr Wehner had justified in the Bundestag the community of the foreign policy of the SPD with that of the CDU/CSU. It was clear where Wehner and Schmidt wanted to go after Wehner had demanded the frontiers of 1937 and cooperated on the Grey Plan for plundering the GDR, and after Helmut Schmidt had consented to the forward strategy and the directives of sub-limited war as confidant of the Bundeswehr generals in the SPD leadership.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*When the leading group in the SPD rejected the coalition with the FDP although it would have had a majority of votes in parliament then deeper causes must supposedly have induced the SPD leadership to enter coalition negotiations with Strauss and Kiesinger?*

Walter Ulbricht:

In fact, the SPD leadership would not have needed a coalition with Kiesinger and Strauss for a policy within the framework of the constitution. But Wehner, Schmidt, Schiller and others are keen to take part in the formed rule of the CDU/CSU. This time they wanted to be present at the right-wing course. This transition to new anti-democratic methods of rule decided at the CDU Congress means, for example:

- amendment of the constitution by a so-called stabilization law;

- amendment of the constitution by the so-called emergency constitution;

- amendment of the constitution by changing the voting law, which aims at the elimination of any truly democratic opposition in the Bundestag.

Finally, the sense of the coalition is that the leading group of the SPD is ready to share responsibility for the imperialist, anti-democratic and anti-trade union course of the CDU/CSU in the transitional Kiesinger government and play the pacemaker for Strauss.

Practice will show how little social and how little democratic the policy of the social democratic ministers will be and how it harms relaxation and security in Europe.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Before the beginning of the coalition negotiations the SPD had demanded a completely new policy because the old is bankrupt. What came out of the negotiations on the formation of a government in this respect?*

Walter Ulbricht:

The leading politicians of the CDU/CSU have openly declared that they intend to continue the old policy, but supplemented by a few new methods of nationalism and revanchism against the GDR—connected with increased demagoguery. After all, the old forces will occupy the chief positions in this new government. Willy Brandt is foreseen as foreign policy publicity manager of the adventurous imperialist policy, and Wehner is to enrich the psychological fight against the GDR with new methods. For the rest the representatives of the big monopolies have the decisive word.



*Neues Deutschland:*

*If I understand you correctly, Comrade Ulbricht, the points are shifted for a repetition of the old story?*

Walter Ulbricht:

Yes, indeed! Always when the big bourgeoisie is in difficulties it calls on the right-wing social democratic leaders for support. This was so in 1914, 1918 and 1923. It was so in 1945–46, and it is so again in 1966. But they always had to go again when they had done their bit. It is really not difficult to see that with its present coalition policy the SPD leadership is gambling with its electoral chances in 1969.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*These historical comparisons apply not only tactically. Seen from the real political relation of forces in Europe the policy of the SPD leadership has no perspective.*

Walter Ulbricht:

The policy of the SPD minister candidates has as little perspective as the policy of Adenauer and Erhard.

First, there is a German state of peace and socialism in which the working class has the political power in alliance with the farmers and intellectuals.

Secondly, there is a pact of friendship and assistance between the USSR and the GDR and an alliance system of the Warsaw Treaty states.

Thirdly, the working class and intellectuals recall the experiences of 1932–33 and the methods with which the German people were led to war provocation.

Fourthly, the peoples of the NATO states distrust Bonn policy and are against the striving of West German imperialism for hegemony in West Europe.

Thus those SPD leaders participating in the right-wing course of the CDU/CSU are putting their own party at stake.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Can nothing oppose the dangerous policy of the Bonn emergency front?*

Walter Ulbricht:

This is the state of affairs: A Kiesinger/Strauss/Wehner government, too, can realize such reactionary measures only if the West German working class and the democratically minded West German citizens tolerate it.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*What can be the effect of the changeover of a group of social democratic leaders to the CDU government bunker on the cooperation of the working class, the intellectuals and the trade union organizations in the two German states?*

Walter Ulbricht:

The transition of a group of social democratic leaders to the government policy of the CDU/CSU is a heavy blow to their own party, against the

SPD itself. It is quite possible that first the policy of Brandt, Wehner and Schmidt will be followed by a certain confusion in West Germany and that a possible consequence will be a splitting up of the social democratic forces. But this will only be temporary. The clarity through new experiences and perceptions will lead to the cooperation of all peace-loving, democratic and anti-imperialist forces. Even the cleverest demagoguery and chauvinist propaganda abroad cannot in the long run deceive them about the burdening of the working masses with a state budgetary deficit of more than nine thousand millions and the anti-democratic measures at home in West Germany. The community of interests of the CDU/CSU and Hitler generals and a few SPD leaders in the bunker of "Fallex 66" remains symptomatic of the so-called Germany policy of the three West German government parties which destroys any national perspective. All the more urgently are the community of interests and cooperation of the working class, intellectuals and the trade union organizations of the two German states which are put on the agenda by life itself.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*May I throw in a question? What effect does the development in Bonn have on the dialogue between the SED and SPD?*

Walter Ulbricht:

Now it is clearly apparent to everyone with what foresight we introduced and conducted the correspondence between the SED and SPD. The press of the West German big bourgeoisie was quite right when it stated that the SED wants to rid the SPD from the community with the CDU. Yes, indeed! This was the purpose of this correspondence. We wanted to build a bridge for the SPD leadership which makes it easier for it to set out upon the way of democracy and peace and cut itself loose from revanchism. Thus, our letters to the SPD are still of a very topical significance. At that time the CDU/CSU did everything possible to stop the dialogue. It therefore shifted its sole representation pretension into the foreground with the handcuff law and used it to torpedo the dialogue. At the same time Wehner and Brandt proved by joining this political manoeuvre that they were not interested in the talk with the SED, that for them the

relations with the CDU/CSU and assistance for it was more important. Instead of conducting the dialogue with the SED a few SPD leaders plunged themselves into the bunker community with the CDU/CSU.

Of course, the dialogue goes on, also after the CDU/CSU was able to win a few SPD leaders for the government coalition. Yes, I want to say that the dialogue between the social democrats, the trade unionists and the social democratic organizations on the one side and the SED on the other now has a still deeper importance. Now every social democrat can see that relaxation between the two German states is in inseparable connection with the question of what kind of Germany do you want? A peaceful, democratic one or an imperialist Germany struggling for hegemony in Europe?

Wehner, Brandt and Schmidt have expressed themselves for an imperialist Germany. We regret this especially for the sake of the social democratic workers who are now understandably deeply disappointed and have got into serious conflicts. The tragic situation in which the social democratic members now are can only be overcome by themselves.

At any rate we feel connected in close solidarity with the West German

workers, the social democrats and trade unionists, all peace-loving and democratically minded citizens of West Germany.

We are aware of the necessity of our joint striving for peace and security and our joint struggle for the victory of humanity over inhumanity in West Germany, too. We unswervingly continue the dialogue to promote the community of interests of all peace-loving and democratic forces. Even Herr Wehner with his bunker community of interests with Strauss and Kiesinger will not be able to destroy the community of interests of the working class and the peace-loving forces of the two German states.

#### *Neues Deutschland:*

*What do you think, Comrade Ulbricht, is the key question in the present situation? The negotiations between CDU and SPD on the basis of the revanchist policy prove that the CDU and SPD party leaderships have written off reunification, for a reunification with Strauss and the Hitler generals commanding the Bundeswehr is certainly not realistic. But how, in fact, are things to go on?*

Walter Ulbricht:

No matter in what composition the Bundestag may form a new West German government, we stick to the principle of peaceful coexistence, the secure peaceful coexistence of the two German states with equal rights. This requires normal relations between the governments of the two German states. Only thus can the way to their closer cooperation be paved.

The key question is the strengthening of the first German peace state of workers and farmers and the intensifying of efforts to bring about security in Europe. Revanchism and nationalism which are now stirred up by Bonn can only be checked when all peoples and states of Europe agree on European security. And this means at the same time to agree that all European states—including the two German states—maintain normal diplomatic relations with one another and recognize the existing frontiers—including the frontiers between the two German states.

*Neues Deutschland:*

*Thank you very much, Comrade Ulbricht, for replying to our questions.*



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